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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Communications Electronic Media Services Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2650

February 18, 1994

RETURNING CROPLAND TO WETLANDS -- USDA's Soil Conservation Service will purchase easements from landowners who agree to restore farmed, converted, or potential wetlands in eight midwest States. Missouri and Iowa will have the largest acreage accepted in the program, and will receive two-thirds of the funding, \$10 million. Paul Johnson, chief of the Soil Conservation Service, says the 25,000 acre program enhances the environment, increases the water-holding capacity of the floodplains, and gives midwestern landowners an opportunity to recoup some of their losses from the disastrous floods. **Contact: Mary Ann McQuinn (202) 205-6202.**

WETLANDS IN THE 1995 BUDGET -- The proposed Fiscal Year 1995 USDA budget includes \$241 million to enroll 300,000 new acres in the Wetland Reserve Program. The program is an alternative to levy repair in flooded sections of the upper midwest. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

CROP INSURANCE PROPOSAL -- The Administration's proposed FY 1995 budget proposal for USDA contains a proposal to replace the current crop insurance system with a basic level of insurance for all producers in farm programs. Coverage is based on 50 percent of normal yield, with eligible losses reimbursed at 60 percent of the expected price for the crop. The policy will be available for \$50. Higher levels of coverage would be available through private insurance companies. The new system is designed to be the primary source of disaster relief for producers, and is expected to save taxpayers \$750 million over a five year period. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

HUNGER FORUM -- The second in a series of hunger forums was held February 14 in Weslaco, TX. Ellen Haas, USDA assistant secretary for Food and Consumer Services, and Representative Kika de la Garza, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, heard testimony. Among those speaking was Sherry Lee, executive director of a food bank in Albuquerque, NM. Lee said that communities cannot begin to effectively conquer crime and violence, illiteracy and health problems until hunger and malnutrition have been eradicated from people living in poverty. Additional forums will be held in Kansas City, MO and Dayton, OH. **Contact: Laura Trivers (703) 305-2039.**

NORTHWEST TIMBER SALES -- If an injunction is modified that has stopped timber sales in northern spotted owl habitat, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will offer for sale 31 million board feet of timber from 24 timber sales in Oregon, Washington and California. The action is the result of an agreement that environmental groups will not oppose a request to release sales from a court injunction if the request is consistent with President Clinton's forestry management plan and existing environmental laws. The 24 sales represent a portion of 54 sales pending. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

POULTRY LABELS -- USDA is examining its policy on the use of the term "fresh" on poultry product labels. Current policy permits a "fresh" label if the poultry product has never been at or below zero degrees Fahrenheit. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy notes that California recently enacted a state law restricting use of the term "fresh" to poultry that has never been at or below 25 degrees Fahrenheit. Espy says USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service should examine whether its current policy is reasonable and meets today's consumer expectations of food safety. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

SOYBEANS -- Large competitor supplies of soybeans will likely keep U.S. exports at a slow pace. U.S. ending stocks will probably fall to an unusually tight 150 million bushels. U.S. prices are expected to average \$6.10 to \$7.10 per bushel, well above the \$5.56 of last year. Reduced U.S. soybean crush and below-average oil yields will combine to produce much tighter oil supplies. This is expected to boost prices to 27 cents per pound, up from an average 21 cents in 1992/93. **Contact: Scott Sanford (202) 219-0840.**

OIL AND AG -- The price of crude oil is the key determinant of petroleum-based products. The continued decline in oil prices does not stimulate alternatives to petroleum-based fuels and lubricants, but it does offer the prospect of reduced input costs for farmers. Most analysts are forecasting that crude oil prices will be about 10 percent lower in 1994 than in 1993. Despite the motor fuel tax increase, gasoline prices are expected to average about \$1.20 per gallon this year and diesel fuel about \$1.18. **Contact: Arthur Wiese (202) 219-0782.**

150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY -- The system of agricultural cooperatives celebrates its 150th year in 1994. The cooperative form of business activity traces its beginnings to a set of principles established by tradesmen in Rochdale, England. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers organized a cooperative in 1844 to purchase food and supply items. The rules for governing their society were subsequently widely embraced in countries around the world. A logo recognizing the anniversary has been created by staff members of the Associated Electric Cooperatives, Springfield, MO. Designed to resemble a round stamp of approval, it contains the slogan, Time Tested, Member Approved, that surrounds the phrase "1844-1944, 150 years of cooperation." No special permission is required to use the logo. Camera-ready copies can be obtained by calling Leta Mach at (202) 638-6222. **Contact: Randall Torgerson (202) 720-7558.**

CUT FATS AND CHOLESTEROL -- One of the most important defenses against high blood cholesterol is a diet low in both saturated fats and cholesterol. Dietary changes alone can cut blood cholesterol count by 15 percent, a proven way to lower the risk of heart attack. The way the food is cooked can make as big a difference in healthful eating as what is cooked. Use methods that allow fat to drain off food, or require little or no added fat, such as steaming, broiling, stir-frying and baking. Use nonstick pans and liquid vegetable oil or spray when frying. For soups and stews remove most of the fat by cooling the dish, then skimming the fat from the top and reheating. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-3329.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1915 -- Now is the time to decide what things to buy for this spring's home garden. **Brenda Curtis** reports. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1397 -- What is "fresh" poultry?; gardening by the fire; hungry for a good steak; cold and your camera; craving carrots. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1907 -- Farm financial update; using genetics for leaner meat; shrinking oilseed supplies; bossie means business; wheat outlook; help for beginning farmers. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1660 -- Malaria medicine; pharmaceutical crop; travel advisory; coccidiosis study; "bio-geo-chemical" diseases. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.) Program note: This series will cease production next month. The final tape, #1663, will be mailed March 8, 1994. Following that date Agricultural Research Service information will be incorporated into the Consumer Time and Agritape Features segments of the weekly cassette. The number of cuts in these two series will be expanded as necessary to include research stories.

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, February 23, summer food program gets a boost, catfish processing, poultry outlook, dairy outlook; Thursday, February 24, world tobacco situation, cotton and wool outlook; Friday, February 25, export update; Monday, February 28, ag prices update; Tuesday, March 1, horticultural exports, crop & weather update. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. **USDA** has no major economic or statistical reports scheduled for **March 2-9**, but as always the Newsline will have new stories every workday based on breaking news or unscheduled releases.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on research by the USDA Forest Service to build better timber bridges. **Pat O'Leary** reports on a toll-free number to reserve National Forest campsites. **Tyson Gair**, Mississippi State U., on BST - dairy farmers and consumers.

ACTUALITIES -- **Norton Strommen**, USDA chief meteorologist, with the weekly weather and crop report.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** presents a five-part series on Precision Farming. **Lynn Wyvill** reports on putting wood waste to work. **DeBoria Janifer** reports on a Resource Conservation and Development project in West Virginia.

*Available on Satellite **Galaxy 4**, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT; Saturdays 10:00 a.m., EDT; Mondays 8:00 a.m., EDT.*

OFFMIKE

TWO FARM BROADCASTERS...and an ag writer represented the U.S. last month at the International Study Tour in Berlin, Germany. **Cathy Patton** (Kansas Ag Network/WIBW, Topeka, KS), **Herb Plambeck** (WMT, Cedar Rapids, IA) and **Jack DeHus** with a Bellingham, WA commodities firm, participated with journalists from 23 nations. They toured farms in eastern Germany, visited the International Agriculture and Horticulture Exposition and Food Fair, and the Internationale Grune Week. Herb says over half a million people visited the Grune Week. U.S. participants were chosen by the ag consulate of the German Embassy in Washington, D.C.

FUND RAISER...to send ambulances and medical equipment to needy hospitals in Poland is being MC'd by **Ed Slusarczyk** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, NY). The April 8 program in Utica will feature the Jan Lewan Show Band.

SPRING...can't be far away, says **Jack McConnell** (KMMJ, Grand Island, NE), the scout birds for sand hill cranes are beginning to arrive on their way north.

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ANOTHER NETWORK...has been acquired by Clear Channel Communications, says **Ron Hays** (Oklahoma Agrinet, Oklahoma City). Virginia Ag Net, in Richmond, VA, is providing 10 daily feeds to stations. **Norm Hyde** is behind the microphone. Ron says daily markets are fed to the network from his operation in Oklahoma City.

REASSIGNMENT...for **Tom Wilborn** (Associated Press, Washington, D.C.), from AP radio's agriculture beat at USDA to business reporting. AP has ended its daily series of ag reports. Tom will continue Sunrise and ag market info on the broadcast wire.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Joann Locke** (KTTS, Springfield, MO). She is the featured farm broadcaster in the February, 1994 Mid-AM Reporter salute.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK...is March 14-20. National Agriculture Day is March 20, the first day of spring. Info kit available from the Ag Council of America, (202) 682-9200.

VIC POWELL 
Office of Communications